

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user.
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved; and

once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status ~~does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.~~

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers by being routed to a single folder, accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy

26. (Currently amended) A method for operating an electronic messaging system comprising:

directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers maintains an independent copy of the routed electronic message, and wherein each of the at least two human

approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the outgoing electronic message being sent to the intended recipient;

presenting the electronic message on a display to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection;

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message;

routing the electronic message to the recipient if the electronic message is approved; and

once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message wherein the notifying includes providing to the at least one other approver an indicator to be associated with the other approver's copy of the electronic message, the indicator characterizing the changed status ~~does not require the approver being notified to access the electronic message from a common mailbox.~~

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 27, wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers by being routed to a single folder accessible by the at least two approvers, from multiple devices at multiple locations.